



Did you know...

According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN):

- ◆ 50% of accommodations cost less than \$500
- ◆ 19% cost nothing at all
- ◆ More than 80% cost less than \$1000

Accommodation examples:

- ◆ Flexible work schedules
- ◆ Software
- ◆ Ergonomic chair
- ◆ Telecommuting
- ◆ Providing publications and documents in Braille and/or large print
- ◆ Allowing frequent breaks
- ◆ Negotiating job tasks



**MARYLAND
BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP
NETWORK**

This fact sheet and others can be found at www.mdod.maryland.gov and www.mdworkforcepromise.org.

Questions?

Contact the Maryland Business Leadership Network

Accommodations

Overview

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the provision that relates to employment and job accommodations. The ADA requires businesses with 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations that allow qualified employees with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

This fact sheet discusses tips for accommodating employees and customers with disabilities and key definitions.

Tips for Accommodating Employees

An employee who is eligible under ADA can request an accommodation at any time during employment. The following are tips to consider when an employee requests an accommodation.

- ◆ Determine what the essential functions of the position are. A job description or analyses can assist in this process.
- ◆ Once the essential functions are defined, decide if the employee is qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodation(s).
- ◆ Identify the employee's needs by: (1) discussing the request and their needs with the individual, (2) employing confidentiality principles during the process, (3) consulting with rehabilitation professionals and (4) identifying the employee's functional limitations and potential accommodations.
- ◆ Select and provide an appropriate accommodation for the employee as

well as the employer. Keep in mind (1) the cost of the accommodation should not be an undue hardship, (2) it should be effective, reliable, easy to use and readily available and (3) the employee should have the opportunity to try the product or piece of equipment to make sure it will fulfill the need.

- ◆ Follow-up with the employee to ensure the accommodation is assisting the employee in completing the necessary work tasks. Modify the accommodation if necessary.

Do not assume that an individual cannot perform certain tasks. With the right accommodations and support, anyone can be productive. For Maryland resources on accommodations see the fact sheet entitled *Resources for Reasonable Accommodation Requests*.

There are tax credits available to help pay for workplace accommodations. For more information on tax credits see the fact sheet entitled *Tax Incentives/Credits*.

Tips for Accommodating Customers

According to the 2000 U.S. Census there are more than 50 million Americans with disabilities. At 19.3% of the overall population, individuals with disabilities as a group, are larger than any single ethnic, racial or cultural group in the United States. It makes good business sense to have an accessible place of business.

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Tips for Accommodating Customers (continued)

Consider the following tips to ensure your place of business is accessible for customers with disabilities.

- ◆ Speak directly to the customer when you are interacting with him or her.
- ◆ When you offer assistance, wait for instructions on how to help.
- ◆ Do not lean on a wheelchair or any other assistive device.
- ◆ If you do not understand an individual, ask the individual to repeat himself/herself.

- ◆ Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking.
- ◆ Provide accessible restrooms, drinking fountains and telephones.
- ◆ Keep hallways, aisles and office spaces clear and free of clutter.

Remember, customers with disabilities are individuals, just like every other customer. The best way to learn how to accommodate customers with disabilities is to ask them directly.

Key Definitions

The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) defines the following terms that are helpful to understand when discussing accommodations.

- ◆ Reasonable Accommodations - adjustments or modifications ranging from: making the physical work environment accessible; restructuring a job; providing assistive equipment; providing certain types of personal assistants (such as a reader for a person who is blind, or an interpreter for a person who is deaf); transferring an employee to a different job or location; or providing flexible scheduling.
- ◆ Undue Hardship - means an action requiring significant difficulty or expense. Factors to consider when determining if an accommodation would cause an undue hardship include:
 - ◆ the nature and cost of the proposed accommodation,
 - ◆ the resources and size of the business as a whole and of the facility making the accommodation,
 - ◆ the type of business operation, including the composition, function and structure of the workforce and
 - ◆ the impact that the accommodation would have on the facility and on the business as a whole.
- ◆ Qualified Individual - an individual with a disability who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of a employment position, and who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of the position that is held or desired by the individual.
- ◆ Essential Functions - fundamental job duties of the employment position that the individual with a disability holds or desires. This does not include marginal functions of the position.

Resources

ADA & IT Information Center Mid-Atlantic Region

Voice / TTY: 800-949-4232
Email: adainfo@transcen.org
Website: www.adainfo.org

DisabilityInfo.gov

www.DisabilityInfo.gov is website that has employment tips specific to jobseekers with disabilities. At DisabilityInfo.gov you can find employer resources for workplace accommodations.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Voice/TTY: (800) 526-7234
Email: jan@jan.wvu.edu
Website: www.jan.wvu.edu

Maryland Business Leadership Network

Voice: (866) 624-3502
Email: bln@suntrust.com
Website: www.usbln.com

Maryland Department of Disabilities

Voice / TTY: (410) 767-3660
Voice / TTY: (800) 637-4113
Email: mdod@mdod.state.md.us
Website: www.mdod.maryland.gov

Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Information Exchange

Voice: (301) 662-0099
TTY: (301) 662-4853
Email: info@mdworkforcepromise.org
Website: www.mdworkforcepromise.org

Maryland State Dept. of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

Voice: (410) 554-9385/ (888) 554-0334
TTY: (410) 554-9411
Email: dors@dors.state.md.us
Website: www.dors.state.md.us

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Voice: (866) ODEP - DOL (633-7365)
TTY: (877) 889-5627
Website: www.dol.gov/odep

VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

Voice: (804) 828-1851
TTY: (804) 828-2494
Website: www.worksupport.com